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CHRONICLES

OF

OLD SOUTH CHURCH,

BEING THE

THIRD CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH IN BOSTON.

September 1st, 1861.

BOSTON:
ALFRED MUDGE AND SON, PRINTERS,
34 School Street.
1863.

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BOSTON. OLD SOUTH CHURCH.
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CHRONICLES.

The Old South Church was organized May 12th and 16th, 1669, having withdrawn from the First Church, which was formed July 30th, 1630. Dissatisfied members, twenty-nine in number, applied for dismission to form this new third church, but were refused. They were, notwithstanding, regularly organized by a council, and assumed the name of the Third Church. They were violently opposed, but, being sanctioned by the town, took measures to erect a meetinghouse on the spot now occupied. The females, twenty-three in number, who are to be regarded as among the founders, were not dismissed from the First Church till sanctioned by a council, in 1674. Contentions between the churches, principally in regard to the proper subjects of baptism and their privileges as citizens, continued till April 23d, 1682, when the two churches agreed to forgive and forget, and live in peace.

The land on which the meetinghouse was built, was

previously given by Madam Norton, widow of Rev. John Norton, formerly a minister of the First Church, who died three years before. The house was built of cedar, with a steeple and square pews, and was named the South Church, and so called till 1717, when the church in Summer Street took the name of New South.

Thomas Thacher was the first pastor: born May 1st, 1620; installed February 16th, 1670; died October 15th, 1678. Two hundred and seventeen members were received into the church during his ministry of nine years. Samuél Willard settled as colleague, April 10th, 1678; died September 12th, 1707. The house was usurped by the British government for church services for a time.

Ebenezer Pemberton settled as colleague with Mr. Willard, August 28th, 1700; died February 13th, 1717. Members received to this time, 753. Joseph Sewall, colleague of Mr. Pemberton, born August 15th, 1688; installed September 16th, 1713; died June 27th, 1769, aged eighty-one.

Thomas Prince, born May 15, 1687; ordained October 1st, 1718; died October 22d, 1758. A large and valuable collection of classical, historical, and theological books, gathered during fifty years, were given by his will to the church. He revised the New England Version of the Psalms, which revision was adopted by the church for public worship, October 9th, 1758.

Public service held Monday, October 30th, 1727, on the morning following the great earthquake. New Meetinghouse commenced March 31st, 1729; completed, April, 1730.

In the Revival of 1740, one hundred were added to the church. Alexander Cumming was installed colleague of Dr. Sewall, February 25th, 1761; died August 25th, 1763.

Collection taken in aid of the sufferers by the great fire in Charleston, South Carolina, May 20, 1741.

Samuel Blair, ordained November 26th, 1766; dismissed October 10th, 1769. The Church two years without a pastor.

John Bacon and John Hunt settled September 25th, 1771. Mr. Bacon was dismissed February 8th, 1775; died October 25th, 1820.

During Mr. Hunt's ministry, the memorable scenes of the Revolution, which took place in the church, gave to it the name of "The Sanctuary of Freedom." Here was delivered Warren's fearless oration on the anniversary of the massacre of the 5th of March, 1770, and other meetings were held that called forth the eloquence that moved the country, and shook the British throne. When the gates of Boston were shut, Mr. Hunt went to Northampton, where he died of consumption, December 30th, 1775.

The church was broken up during the occupancy by

the British. They demolished the parsonage house; the meetinghouse was turned into a riding school for Burgoyne's cavalry, and the inside burned for firewood; Rev. Mr. Prince's manuscripts were destroyed; and the holy place profaned, till Boston was evacuated in 1776.

Dr. Eckley was ordained October 27th, 1779; died April 30th, 1811. The house was repaired and re-dedicated March 2d, 1783.

During about five years of the occupancy of the meetinghouse by the British, the church and congregation were accommodated at King's Chapel.

October 16th, 1803, at a meeting of the church it was voted, to have a lecture once a week. This was opposed by the pewholders, and the controversy continued till August, 1807.

March 13th, 1804, eight brethren voted to form themselves into a society for religious improvement. Dr. Eckley was requested to preside. At that time but one brother in the church felt sufficient confidence to lead in prayer.

Rev. Joshua Huntington was ordained as colleague with Dr. Eckley, May 18th, 1808. By his influence, at his study, the American Education Society was formed in 1815. He was President of the Boston Society for the Religious and Moral Instruction for the Poor, and was active in all similar institutions. He died at Groton, on his return from a journey taken for the benefit of his health, of a fever, September 11th, 1819.

In February, 1809, twenty-six persons from Old South, and other churches, were organized and formed Park Street Church.

The church without a pastor seventeen months.

Benjamin B. Wisner ordained as pastor, February 21st, 1821; dismissed, November 12th, 1832.

Samuel H. Stearns ordained April 16th, 1834; dismissed March 8th, 1836.

George W. Blagden installed September 28th, 1836.

The twenty-fifth Anniversary of Dr. Blagden's settlement over the church, was observed September 28th, 1861. A commemorative discourse was preached by Dr. Blagden, and other services held, appropriate to the occasion.

J. M. Manning installed March 11th, 1857.

Madam Norton conveyed by deed dated April 1st, 1669, the land on which was built the first meeting-house. On the 30th of June 1677, she gave, by another deed, the eastern half of the remainder of the lot; and, by will, on the 20th of August 1677, the residue of the lot with the house in which she had resided.

The "Old South Row," on Washington Street, was built in 1800. The Parsonage Houses, on Milk Street, were taken down in 1845, and "Old South Block" erected on the spot.

The meetinghouse took fire December 29th, 1810, from the "Franklin House" opposite, but was saved by Mr.

Isaac Harris, to whom the society presented a silver testimonial of gratitude.

In 1857, extensive repairs were made upon the church, the walls and ceiling frescoed, and the upper gallery reduced in width one-half.

The Organ was built in London, in 1822, by Thomas Elliott. Rebuilt in 1859 by E. & G. G. Hook, of Boston.

The present chapel was erected in 1827.

Since 1827, a Standing Committee of nine, five from the congregation, have been chosen to take care of the temporal business for the year.

In the call of ministers by the church, the congregation have always agreed.

The widows of Dr. Eckley and Huntington were liberally provided for.

A charitable fund was established by the church and society in ~~1811~~. 1839.

Members recorded to have been received from time to time: Thacher's ministry, two hundred and seventeen; Willard's, four hundred and six; Pemberton's and Sewall's, eight hundred and forty; Eckley's and Huntington's, three hundred and twelve; Wisner's and Stearns', five hundred and one; since 1836 to September, 1861, four hundred and one. In all, two thousand six hundred and seventy-seven. Omissions would probably make twenty-nine hundred.

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Habitual discipline has been maintained in the church.

Names of deacons: Peter Bracket; Jacob Elliot; Theophilus Frarye, November 8th, 1685; Nathaniel Williams, October 15th, 1693; James Hill, 1693; Daniel Henchman, died 1761; Jonathan Simpson, 1733; Bartholomew Green; Thomas Hubbard, 1739; Samuel Sewall, 1763; David Jaffries, 1753; William Phillips, 1764; Jonathan Mason, 1770; Thomas Dawes, 1786; Samuel Salisbury, 1794; William Phillips, Jr., 1794; Josiah Salisbury, 1817; Edward Phillips, 1817; Pliny Cutler and Thomas Vose, 1826; Samuel T. Armstrong, 1829; Charles Stoddard, 1840; Oliver Dimon, 1847; Loring Lothrop, 1851; Henry H. Jones, 1854.

Edward Raynsford had the title of Ruling Elder at the commencement, 1669.

Choristers: Bela Hunting, Joseph Bailey, Joseph Hayden, Justus Lincoln, I. S. Withington, Marcus Colburn, J. Q. Wetherbee.

Organists since 1823: S. P. Taylor, A. P. Heinrich, Sumner Hill, George I. Webb, Richard S. Hambridge, Charles F. Baldwin, Edward J. Long, George F. Hayter, Sumner, Fred. F. Müller, B. J. Lang.

Sextons since 1810: John Laws, A. Streeter, John Elms, Sumner Hill, E. Knight, Harlem Rily, Warner Bullard, William Learned.

Morning prayer meetings were established in the vestry, November 8, 1850, for the public.

Sabbath school superintendents: F. C. Parker, 1827; L. A. Shaw, 1829; S. T. Armstrong, 1830; T. Vose, 1833; C. Stoddard, 1839; G. R. Sampson, 1842; Geo. F. Bigelow, 1851; G. G. Tucker, 1855; C. Stoddard, 1857; L. Lothrop, 1857; G. P. Davis, 1858; E. T. Eastman, 1859.

Church Covenant remains as adopted November 3, 1769.

The Confession of Faith is as adopted 1680.

Mission Chapel opened in Lowell Street, November 16th, 1856. Chapel erected in Chambers Street, and dedicated September 1st, 1861. Loring Lothrop, superintendent. Church organized with 33 members, December 4, 1862. The services of the Sabbath are conducted by the pastors of Old South, alternately.

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